

The Work of an Hour: A Case Study of Propaganda

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Abstract

This research paper discusses the messaging of United States President George W. Bush and his administration regarding the U.S. led invasion of Iraq. Transcripts of presidential communications, national news programs, and public opinion polls from 2001-03 were analyzed to identify patterns in these communications. This review demonstrated techniques similar to those used in historical propaganda campaigns to sway public opinion. The introduction and repetition of key terminology from the government was followed by magnification by television news programs. These messages were broadcast despite lack of evidence of Iraq's involvement with the 9/11 attacks or their possession of weapons of mass destruction. This case study demonstrates the need for instruction of information and media literacy to include recognizing propaganda.

Keywords: propaganda, Iraq, terror, Bush, Saddam, weapons of mass destruction, public opinion

Prologue: March 19, 2003, 9:00 p.m. EST - CNN—Larry King Live

Breathless with anticipation, the Cable News Network (CNN), the network that brought the world explosion-by-explosion coverage of the 100-hour 1991 Gulf War, was poised to do it again. The president of the United States had given the dictator of Iraq 48 hours to get out of town and out of his own country. And now the deadline had passed, and Saddam Hussein, for all anyone knew, was still in Iraq, flaunting defiance, preparing for the fight that was to come. *High Noon*, with George W. Bush as the stubbornly intrepid Marshal Will Kane and Hussein as the dastardly Frank Miller. It was a scenario that fit perfectly with Bush's image of himself as the hero-cowboy in this contest he had spent the past year-and-a-half characterizing as a struggle between Good and Evil.

It was early morning in Baghdad, already March 20th, and the city's dusty streets were empty and quiet. The sky was still dark. There was no clue as to the mood in the city at this historic moment. And there was no sign of Saddam.

The mood in CNN's Atlanta studios, however, was galvanic. At exactly 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, CNN's long-time host Larry King burst onto the screen with "Time's up for Saddam Hussein! What's next?" his words virtually bellowed over the pounding theme music. With the caption "Time's up for Saddam" across the bottom of the screen, King introduced his guests, an array of journalists, politicians, and ex-military.

It quickly became apparent that, despite the aura of "reporting," there was actually very little to report. Nothing had happened. But CNN still had a show to put on.

Correspondent Christiane Amanpour, buffeted by desert winds in Kuwait, reported that 17 Iraqi soldiers had already surrendered, also that she had "heard" that ten Iraqi

artillery pieces had been “taken out” by American and British aircraft. Beyond that, she had nothing specific to say.

Bob Simon, on loan from CBS News, reported from Tel Aviv that Israelis had been advised to keep their gas masks with them but were otherwise unconcerned and were proceeding with their Purim parties. Mostly, he talked about his experience as a prisoner of Iraq during the first Gulf War, 12 years earlier.

In the absence of anything real to report, speculation seemed to be the show’s organizing principle. With nothing solid to convey to his audience, King labored heroically to keep the show moving forward by firing off questions such as

- What can you tell us?
- Are there rumors about *when*?
- When does it begin?
- Is this it?

His questions produced no real information, only more guessing. A child’s eagerness for Christmas could not have evinced more impatience for the start of an event.

Then, at 9:37 p.m., something finally did happen. Air raid sirens shattered the uneasy pre-dawn silence of Baghdad as anti-aircraft fire punched through low-hanging clouds. Nervous Iraqi crews fired at invisible targets. For many minutes the view through the stationary cameras of CNN showed only an eerily greenish-tinted city; there seemed to be no ordnance descending on the Iraqi capital, no streaking rockets, no aircraft in sight. The only evidence of action was the staccato roar of anti-aircraft guns. If bombs were falling, they were nowhere to be seen or heard on *Larry King Live*. It was 5:45 a.m. in

Baghdad.

Eventually, Larry King left the air without having MC'ed the official commencement of hostilities, and was replaced by anchorman Aaron Brown, who coordinated CNN's coverage from the newsroom. Regarding the shooting in Baghdad, Brown reported being told by a Pentagon official "When it starts, there won't be any doubt about it."

Nevertheless, there still was no consensus as to whether the war had begun.

At 9:45 p.m., the question was finally answered. The president's press secretary, Ari Fleischer, rushed into the White House press briefing room and issued this statement: "The opening stages of the disarmament of Iraq have begun. The president will address the nation at 10:15." And, without further comment, he rushed out again, even as reporters were still getting their steno pads ready.

Even so, confusion continued to reign. Reporter John King, from his post outside the White House, repeatedly misquoted Fleischer's statement, saying "the *liberation* of Iraq" had begun (emphasis added), recalling the verbiage used by a previous presidential spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, at the start of the first Gulf War twelve years before.

By 9:53 p.m. (5:53 a.m. in Baghdad), the firing had stopped. Restored to an attitude of uneasy quiet, the capital of Iraq faced an ominous and uncertain dawn.

As promised, at exactly 10:15 p.m., President George W. Bush appeared from the Oval Office to confirm that action to remove Saddam Hussein had commenced. Bush couched the action in terms of freedom for the Iraqi people and security from "weapons of mass murder" for Americans. With smooth subtlety, the president conflated the alleged actions of the Iraqi regime with terrorism against the United States. He closed by invoking

the protection of the Deity for his nation and his nation's troops (Vanderbilt).

The second war with Iraq in a dozen years had begun.

Though the war itself was just beginning, one of the most successful propaganda campaigns in American history was coming to an end. With energy, subtlety, and relentless persistence, the Bush administration succeeded in taking the United States and several other nations into a war that would fail in its stated aim of destroying terrorism but would succeed outstandingly in roiling the Middle East for years and which would, in hindsight, be deemed a blunder of historic proportions. To accomplish this Bush and company "manipulated public discourse" in order to shape the public's mind regarding Iraq (Paolucci, 2009, p. 881).

The hard sell for invading Iraq had not been initiated by Bush, but by neo-conservatives after the first Gulf War, the one which drove Iraq's army out of Kuwait, but which allowed Iraq's dictator to remain in power: "The PNAC shaped fundamental foreign policy changes that led up to the invasion of Iraq" (Altheide & Grimes, 2005, p. 623). In 1997, members of the outgoing George H. W. Bush administration and others organized themselves into an entity they called the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), an organization with one overarching purpose: to promote "American global leadership" (PNAC, 2000, "About").

In September of 2000, the PNAC published a detailed review of America's defense posture, which it found lacking and not up to the demands of the global hegemony the PNAC viewed as the country's rightful destiny. Accordingly, the PNAC offered numerous

proposals to address the deficiencies it perceived in America's defenses. While the PNAC's review lamented that "the process of transformation...is likely to be a long one," it allowed that this process could be accelerated by "some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor" (PNAC, 2000, p. 51).

A year later, on September 11, 2001, that "catastrophic and catalyzing event" occurred.

All sorts of predicates were floated by the administration and its supporters for sending American troops into Iraq. Peace and freedom for Iraq and the Middle East were two of these, and obviously invading Iraq was the only way to bring peace and freedom to the Middle East. Officials of the United States government endlessly repeated these assertions with such absolute certainty that many people believed them. That, of course, would change as the war devolved into a tragic fiasco.

Those who opposed the war found Bush's adamant hostility toward Iraq and the manifold rationales he proffered to justify it to be completely unacceptable. Regardless, the Bush administration was determined to topple Saddam Hussein from power. While there were several real reasons for toppling Hussein, there was none that justified taking the nation to war to accomplish it. In order for the administration's plan to work, the nation as a whole had to be on board. The country had to be convinced that war with Iraq was an absolute mandate. This would require adroit salesmanship.

So, why, when there was so little evidence to support going to war, were Americans so in favor of it? The answer in one word: propaganda.

Literature Review: Information Literacy and Propaganda

In 1989, in response to a burgeoning Information Age made possible by rapidly evolving technology, the American Library Association (ALA) offered the final report of its Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. The report declared “...people—as individuals and as a nation—must be information literate” if they were to benefit from the sudden superfluity of information (ALA, 1989, para. 3). “To be information literate,” according to the report, “a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (ALA, 1989, para. 3).

For instruction librarians, evaluation may be the most difficult part of information literacy to teach. Disabusing students’ assumption that the item at the top of any Internet or database search result list is *ipso facto* the best result is part of evaluation instruction. Librarians teach students to look at the source of the information, the credentials of the author, and any signs of bias. This level of evaluation is a skill that comes with practice and guidance. Students learn the impact and value of primary sources and of research that is peer reviewed. They learn to question the credentials of self-proclaimed experts. These are essential skills for the information literate.

While bias is certainly a concern, of arguably greater concern are fabrications and lies. Some benign critics refer to these with euphemisms such as “misinformation” and “disinformation.” No matter the nomenclature, it is deceitful, and researchers must be astute enough to identify these misuses of information when they encounter them. This is as true in daily life as it is in academia: “There are sound political and social reasons why

information discernment has become an essential skill in the contemporary world” (Cooper, 2019, p. 445).

Information literacy instruction, for all its worthy intentions, does not teach the insidious influence of propaganda, which can, with nuance, implication, and innuendo, infiltrate the most seemingly unimpeachable sources. In 2009, Paolucci summarized the goals of propaganda thus: “...defining and restricting debate, cultivating support, vilifying opponents, intimidating critics, deflecting attention from troublesome inquiries, and hiding substantive goals of policy” (p. 866). With those goals in mind, perhaps information literacy instruction should be expanded to include the exposition of propaganda. The example scrutinized in this analysis is a case in point why such instruction should occur.

Propaganda as a term and as a concept has its origin in the late Eighteenth Century, when some anti-Catholic writers denounced the Church’s effort to convert non-believers to Catholicism, to propagate the faith and spread the gospel worldwide. This is the earliest known instance of the Latin word “propaganda” (literally, *propagation*) being used in the sense of indoctrination (Foley, 2003, p. 749).

Since this time, propaganda activities have changed to include the nefarious as well as the sacred. Consequently, the word now has various definitions. While the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines propaganda as “communication in which actual or alleged facts, arguments, and opinions are presented in such a way as to induce judgments and attitudes favoring the interest or point of view of those sponsoring the communication,” in a nod to current usage the *Encyclopedia* nevertheless acknowledges the sinister implications of the practice (Foley, 2003, p. 749). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines

propaganda as, in one instance, “An organization, scheme, or movement for the propagation of a particular doctrine, practice, etc.” and, in another, as “The systematic dissemination of information, esp. in a biased or misleading way, in order to promote a political cause or point of view” (*Oxford, Propaganda*). In its most horrid coloration, propaganda is seen as “a weapon of war” (Sinclair, 1940, p. 18). Thus, from a seemingly well-intentioned beginning, propaganda has devolved into the sinister, Machiavellian, manipulative legerdemain we now think of whenever held in thrall by a partisan of any stripe. As Kuehl (2014) notes,

Regardless of how we define propaganda, it inevitably brings us to information designed to influence someone. It may be intended to convince you to purchase a commercial product, espouse a philosophy or ideology, or support or oppose a cause, but it seems to always end in behavior. (p. 13)

According to the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1938), propaganda, broadly speaking, is “the attempt to influence others to some predetermined end by appealing to their thought or feeling” (p. 3). While it seems reasonable to believe, as indicated by the inclusion of “thought” in the Institute’s definition, that propaganda might employ logic, facts, or data to persuade its targets, the most effective practitioners of propaganda remind us again and again that the surest strategy for winning the persuasion game is to appeal to emotions. Experience shows that “effective propaganda need not be logical as long as it foments suspicion, contempt, or hatred” (Allen, 2014, p. 54). Neuroscientist Tali Sharot has observed that simply relating facts to convince someone to believe or think a certain way is less effective than appealing to that person’s emotions (Vedantam, 2017).

Further, Sharot's (2017) work demonstrates that people will tend to accept and believe information and data that confirm pre-existing views, but will dismiss that same data if it does not:

When you provide someone with new data, they quickly accept evidence that confirms their preconceived notions...and assess counterevidence with a critical eye. Because we are exposed to contradicting information and opinions, this tendency will generate polarization, which will expand with time as people receive more and more information. (p. 17)

This phenomenon was foreseen by British writer George Orwell. In "Propaganda and Demotic Speech," Orwell (2002) remarked that "propaganda only seems to succeed when it coincides with what people are inclined to do in any case" (p. 701). Sharot asserts that it is more effectively persuasive to "communicate emotion along with the facts" (Vedantam, 2017). Repeated statements, however blatantly false they may actually be, will tend to concretize as true in the minds of those hearing or reading them, while a relentless application of truth might, in fact, have the opposite of the salutary effect intended. An article for *Politico.com* observed that when "false information comports with preexisting beliefs," those preexisting beliefs tend to be re-urged and re-enforced (Konnikova, 2017, para. 10). Attempts to counter a partisan falsehood with truth "can actually backfire, planting [the falsehood] even more firmly in a person's mind" (Konnikova, 2017, para. 10). So, propaganda might serve actually to concentrate and focus the ignorance that roils within the minds of the misinformed and the willfully obtuse.

In other words, “the essence of fanaticism is that it has almost no tolerance for any data that do not conform to its own point of view” (Postman, 1969, p. 2).

Propaganda, in its basest, most corrupting form, is an instrument of governments and, by extension, politics, and, indeed, “is as old as politics” (Sinclair, 1940, p. 17).

Orwell (2002), in his essay “Politics and the English Language,” asserted “All issues are political issues, and politics itself a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia” (p. 964). And he went on to say that “if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought” (Orwell, 2002, p. 964). Orwell was a great analyzer of the effective and especially the ineffective use of language. In an appendix to his dystopian novel *1984*, Orwell (1987) expounded on the use of language to control thought in the fictitious Oceania. English speech would be re-constructed, he wrote, so that it could be used “without involving the higher brain centers at all” (Orwell, 1987, p. 322).

Orwell reminds us that facts and data can be neutered by careful control of the message, the kind of language manipulation always present in every propaganda campaign. If propaganda relies on repetition, then, according to Orwell (2002), the repeated words constitute “an invasion of one’s mind by ready-made phrases,” which anesthetize “a portion of one’s brain” (p. 294). Thus, thought becomes impossible; there is only reaction. This abuse of language “is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind” (Orwell, 2002, p. 967).

In the context of the invasion of Iraq, propaganda could legitimately be defined as “governmental domestic communications intended to be persuasive and to affect American public opinion” (Lee, 2014, p. 96). Propaganda at one time referred to calls for

patriotism or political allegiance; however, “it now generally implies some element of deception, either in the statement itself or in the motives of the speaker” (Boardman, 1978, p. 82).

Americans had to be convinced and had to overwhelmingly support the invasion of Iraq. Many a time and oft in this effort did the Bush administration warn of death by weapons of mass destruction, launched by the madman of Baghdad—so often, in fact, that in the minds of many Americans, Iraq’s possession of such weapons became a *prima facie* truth as indicated by public opinion polls. As President George W. Bush himself admitted in 2005, “In my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda” (Rich, 2006, p. 197). Whether consciously or not, the Bush administration was putting into practice the dictum of one of the masters of twentieth century propaganda, that propaganda “must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over” and that “only after the simplest ideas are repeated thousands of times will the masses finally remember them” (Hitler, 1971, p. 184).

In 1923, from his cell in Landsberg Prison, Hitler (1971) told us “The receptivity of the great masses is very limited, their intelligence is small, but their power of forgetting is enormous.... [A]ll effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans,” and, further, that “we must avoid excessive intellectual demands on our public...” (p. 180).

If, as Hitler (1971) said, to be effective, propaganda must be “aimed at the emotions” (p. 180) and not the intellect, then the mindset of the target of the propaganda

must be taken into account. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1971) wrote, “All propaganda must be popular and its intellectual level must be adjusted to the most limited intelligence among those it is addressed to” (p. 180). Avoiding “excessive intellectual demands” on the audience was something about which Hitler (1971) was emphatic (p. 180). As Dr. Goebbels explained, “The basic rule of our propaganda must always be to appeal to the instincts and not to reason” (Boelcke & Goebbels, 1970, p. 29). Though Goebbels claimed “that it made no difference whether what was said was true” (Spence, 2006, p. 130), nevertheless, he insisted that lies must be made credible by the inclusion of half-truths (Boelcke & Goebbels, 1970, p. xvi) as well as by repetition.

Altheide and Grimes (2005) assert that “The American public’s window on the world of foreign affairs is framed by what is presented on the nightly newscasts” (p. 617). Certainly, no intellectual demands were made on American citizens in the lead-up to the second Iraq war. It was inconceivable that the citizens should be allowed to stop and think; any application of intellect might have meant a pre-emptive end to the pre-emptive war the Bush administration seemed to crave. And it might be argued, considering the news coverage of the time, that the mainstream press made no intellectual demands either on itself or on policymakers. Journalists appeared to willingly abdicate “their defining role as an *adversarial* watchdog over claims and actions by the government” (Greenwald, 2007, p. 108), rendering the constitutional guarantee of a free press a guarantee of no consequence.

Consistency and coordination were as crucial to the Nazi’s propaganda campaign as repetition and the appeal to emotion. Other authors have written of the importance of

the concept of *predisposition* for the success of any propaganda campaign. Orwell, Sharot, and others have noted and confirmed this phenomenon. This idea of predisposition goes hand-in-hand with the Nazis' utter disdain for the intelligence of their own German people. Hitler and Goebbels both distinguished the average German—"the man in the street"—from the intellectual (Boelcke & Goebbels, 1970, p. 293). The target audience for Nazi propaganda was, in Hitler's words (1971), "the mob of the simple or credulous" (p. 242). In other words, the stupid Germans. Put another way by an earlier proponent of political deception, ". . . the vulgar are always taken by appearances . . . and the world is made up of the vulgar . . ." (Machiavelli, 1988, p. 131).

Deception is another major element in propaganda as we know it today. In some cases, the deception may take the form of mere exaggeration. In others, it may be an omission of an essential fact or emphasis of a supporting point while a point that undercuts the argument is ignored or downplayed. Product marketing employs some of these techniques, sometimes subtly, sometimes not, in order to lull customers into the conviction that what they are being told or sold is absolutely worthy of their faith and trust. But in the context of the political lie, the liar must possess the smoothness of the serpent in the Garden, mixing truth with falsehood to disguise the poison. As Hitler (1971) put it, "a lie always contains a certain factor of credibility" (p. 231). Thus, with the bait of truth, the skilled propagandist snags his prey with the hook of mendacity. And because the masses possess minds of "primitive simplicity," they all the "more easily fall a victim to a big lie than to a little one, since they themselves lie in little things" (Hitler, 1971, p. 231).

Upon conviction of the masses, the damage has been done. Or, as Jonathan Swift (1954) put it in his essay “The Art of Political Lying,” “Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it, so that when men come to be undeceived it is too late” (p. 73).

Method

During the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and in the years since, many commentators have noted the role of rhetoric in making the invasion not only possible, but desirable to the American public. These observations have generally been limited to perfunctory glances at the administration’s utterances correlated with brief side-glances at public reaction.

Analyses of Bush administration rhetoric for its propaganda value have been few as well as limited in scope. A 2005 article by Tom Engelhardt for *Mother Jones* focuses on the rhetoric of a single speech Bush made in Idaho. Engelhardt (2005) pares the speech down to key words, such as “war,” counting the number of times those words are repeated in the speech.

Gershkoff and Kushner, in a paper published in 2005, went further, analyzing the content of several of Bush’s major speeches from 9/11/2001 to 5/1/2003 in which Bush effectively linked the invasion of Iraq with his so-called war on terror in his bid to garner support from citizens for the invasion in spite of there being no ostensible reason to invade.

The current analysis acknowledges peripherally the effect of emotional language in the administration’s pronouncements but seeks, by focusing on a few pivotal points in the lead-up to the invasion, to ferret out associations pushed by Bush and others to link Iraq

and Saddam Hussein to the crimes of September 11th and thus justify the war with Iraq. To accomplish this, the current study expands on the two studies mentioned above in multiple ways. The administration texts in this study include all material in *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* from 9/11/2001 to 3/19/2003, not just Bush's speeches. The reason to include all publicly available documents is simply that comments and questions about the impending invasion tend to pop up in contexts not related to the invasion specifically or to foreign policy generally. In this way, every published administration declaration on the subject has been captured.

This study also includes analysis of press transcripts for the same period. Transcripts of five television news outlets, ABC, CBS, CNN, FOX, and NBC, downloaded from the Nexis Uni database, were examined to see to what extent, if any, news reporting echoed and amplified the administration's message, further fixing it in the minds of the audience and thus aiding the administration in its effort to generate popular support for its plan of invasion.

All text corpora in the study have been subjected to computer analysis to detect the frequency of key words such as "terror," as well as to detect whether keywords (e.g., "terror" and "Iraq") were collocational, implying and sometimes declaring connectivity. In this analysis, a collocation of terms in the linguistic sense is one which is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*: "The habitual juxtaposition or association, in the sentences of a language, of a particular word with other particular words; a group of words so associated." In this study, terms are considered collocational if they appear together in the same sentence, the same paragraph, the same discussion, or the same program.

Negative collocations are also counted, as when the administration's pronouncements concerning Iraq's possession of WMD are called into question; what is important is the *association* of the terms, not the assertion or denial of possession. For example: "UN weapons inspectors say they have found no smoking gun indicating Iraq is hiding weapons of mass destruction..." (CBS, 2003). In either context, the connection between Iraq/Saddam and weapons of mass destruction is established or reinforced. Every time those two terms are heard together is like a hammer blow to a nail, driving the relationship deeper into the collective psyche.

Words appearing in headings and notes were not counted, as these were editorial emendations, not included in the body of the document, nor were stop words such as prepositions and definite articles. Public opinion polling was then factored to gauge the public's reaction to the above verbiage.

By conducting the analysis on this basis, this paper hopes to answer these questions:

- How did the Bush administration frame the necessity of war with Iraq? What verbiage did the government employ? What elements of propaganda were subsumed and embedded in the administration's pronouncements with respect to Iraq and Iraq's intentions?
- Did television news amplify the administration's arguments for invading Iraq? If so, to what extent?
- What was the public's reaction to what it was being told by the media and, by extension, the government?

- Was the war with Iraq the result of a campaign of propaganda foisted on the United States of America and the world? Or was there a valid reason for the war?

September 2001

The immediate and obvious conclusion regarding the 9/11 attacks was that they were acts of terrorism planned and carried out by terrorists, and this conclusion is reflected in President Bush's very first remarks in which he called the event "an apparent terrorist attack" (*United States*, 2001, Book 2, 9/11/01). This focus is sustained throughout the remainder of September, the words *terror*, *terrorism*, *terrorist*, and *terrorize* appearing 340 times in the 55 documents published that month.

But who were the terrorists? Who, specifically, was to blame?

In a press availability at the Pentagon on September 17, Bush firmly placed responsibility for the atrocity on Usama bin Laden and his organization, al Qaida, no doubt about it. Bush reiterated this accusation in a speech to a joint session of Congress on September 20. During the remaining weeks of September, Bush referenced *al Qaida* in association with terrorism 20 times; the two words appear together three times in the same paragraph and seven times in the same sentence. The ten remaining references to *al Qaida*, though not in the same proximity to *terror* as the others, occur in a context that makes the connection unavoidable (*United States*, 2001, Book 2).

Retaliation and accountability require a definite focus, which the amorphous entity al Qaida did not provide, scattered as it was throughout the world in sleeper cells waiting to be called to action. The Bush administration solved this problem by promoting a link

between al Qaida and Afghanistan, a small, landlocked, fundamentalist Islamic nation situated between Iran and Pakistan and governed under strict Islamic law by the Taliban. Afghanistan was, after all, the host of al Qaida training camps and the known safe haven of Usama bin Laden.

September 2001 documents in the *Public Papers* include 22 references to *Afghanistan* and 23 references to *Taliban*. In ten instances, *Afghanistan* or *Taliban* appear in the same paragraph as *terror* or *al Qaida*; in 13 instances, they appear in the same sentence. Thus, through a kind of verbal transitive property, Afghanistan and the Taliban became linked as terrorist associates of bin Laden and his gang and were legitimate targets for retaliation consequently. This connection was reinforced by news coverage. Taking ABC News as an example, ABC's coverage for September 2001 included 1,134 mentions of *Afghanistan* and 876 of *Taliban*, always in proximity to the word *terror* or its derivatives. There was no mistaking what message the American public was to receive. By itself, ABC News amplified this message by a minimum of 4,467%.

Of course, ABC was not alone. All television news operations were energetically at work, reporting everything they could learn about the government's plans and quoting or paraphrasing government pronouncements. The chart in Figure 1 below is an indication of the extent to which the government's language regarding terrorism was repeated for the benefit of media consumers.

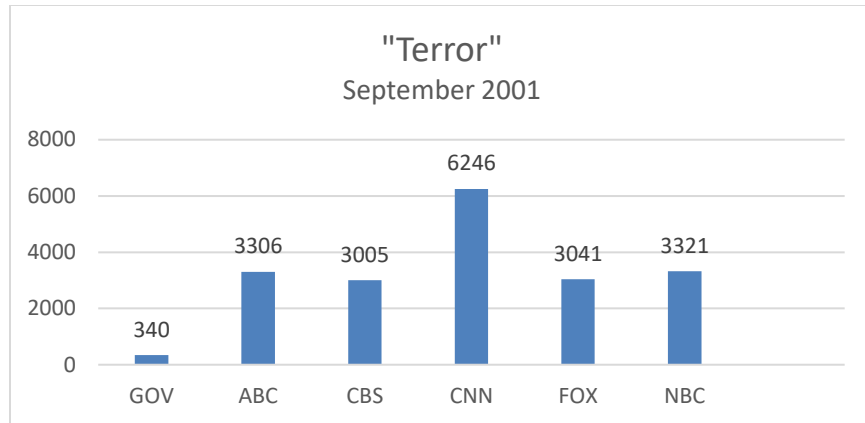


Figure 1

This word count includes *terror* and its derivatives (e.g., *terrorist*, *terrorism*, etc.). *In toto*, these television news organizations augmented the government’s terror message by a factor of 5,564%.

The news also augmented the government’s message concerning the rulers of Afghanistan, as per Figure 2 below.

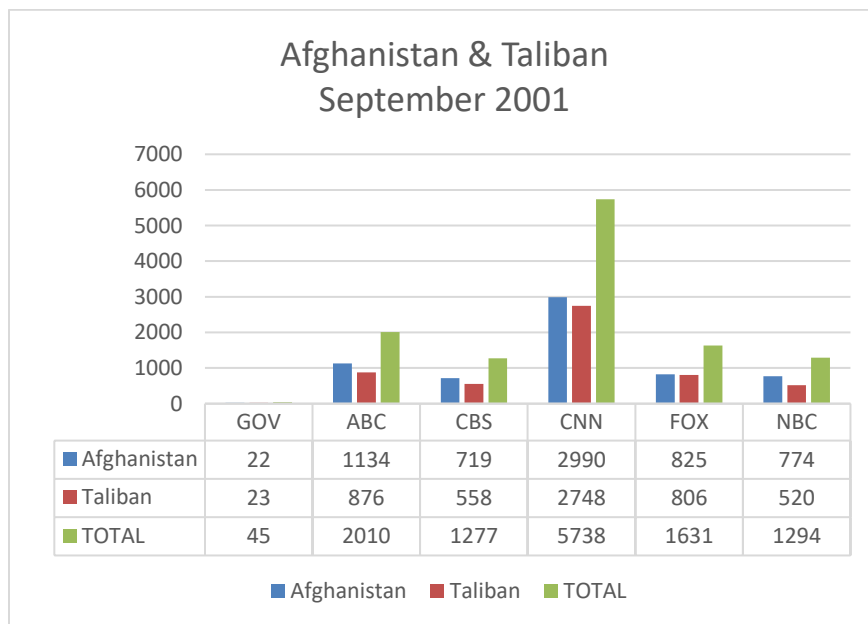


Figure 2

By the third week of September, America was sold. Ninety-one percent of Americans felt targeting and “destroying terrorist operations in Afghanistan” was “very important” (CNN, 2001, Q. 25), and 85% felt the same way about “capturing or killing Osama bin Laden” (CNN, 2001, Q. 27).

But what of Iraq?

The first mention in the ABC transcripts of possible Iraqi involvement is found in a September 11th interview with James Woolsey, former CIA director, who reminded the audience of Iraq’s alleged involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. There was, he said, therefore a chance Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attacks as well. During this same period, terrorist expert Vincent Cannistraro opined, without providing evidence of Iraq’s culpability, that Iraq had a motive to strike the United States (9/12/2001). Though focus on Iraq (mentioned 226 times in the ABC transcripts and only 3 times in the September 2001 *Public Papers*) was understandable given Iraq’s history, discussion of Iraq during September 2001 was generally relegated to the idea that Iraq and its dictator were overall bad actors. There was no evidence put forth linking Iraq to the 9/11 outrage.

Nevertheless, within the first two weeks of the attacks, 90% of people polled believed it very or somewhat important the U. S. remove Iraq’s leader from power (CNN, 2001, Q. 29); 90% believed Iraq supported terrorists (Wirthlin, 2001, Q.13); and 82% blamed Iraq to a greater or lesser extent for the 9/11 attacks (CNN, 2001, Q. 32). This was fertile ground indeed for anyone seeking to promote war with Iraq.

January 2002

By January 2002, the Taliban regime had been defeated and its al Qaida “guests”

forced to flee. On January 29th, Bush made a speech before a joint session of Congress in which he accused North Korea, Iran, and Iraq of supporting terrorism. He dubbed the three the “axis of evil.” In this speech of 3,831 words in which the war on terror occupied a major portion, Bush used the word *terror* or some version of it 36 times, leaving no doubt of the association with terrorism he intended regarding Iraq (*United States*, 2002, Book 1).

In the period from September 11, 2001, through January 2002, Iraq was mentioned in the *Public Papers* only 26 times and Saddam only 5, indicating a seeming lack of focus on Iraq. With the victory in Afghanistan accomplished, the speech of January 29th could be construed as a shift of the administration’s attention.

Meanwhile, in the same period of time, the five television news outlets under examination used these words a total of 8,562 times, amplifying the government’s focus on Iraq 27,619% (see Figure 3 below).

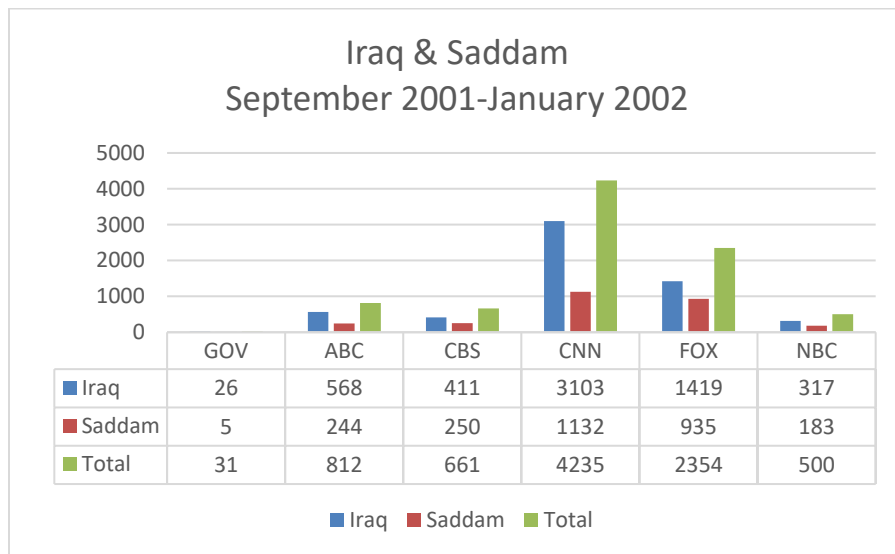


Figure 3

Public opinion during this interval held fairly steady. Forty-one polls asked various segments of the citizenry if they favored invading Iraq. The line chart below (Figure 4), with the exception of a few significant dips, displays a fair amount of consistency of viewpoint (between 50 and 80 percent favorable).

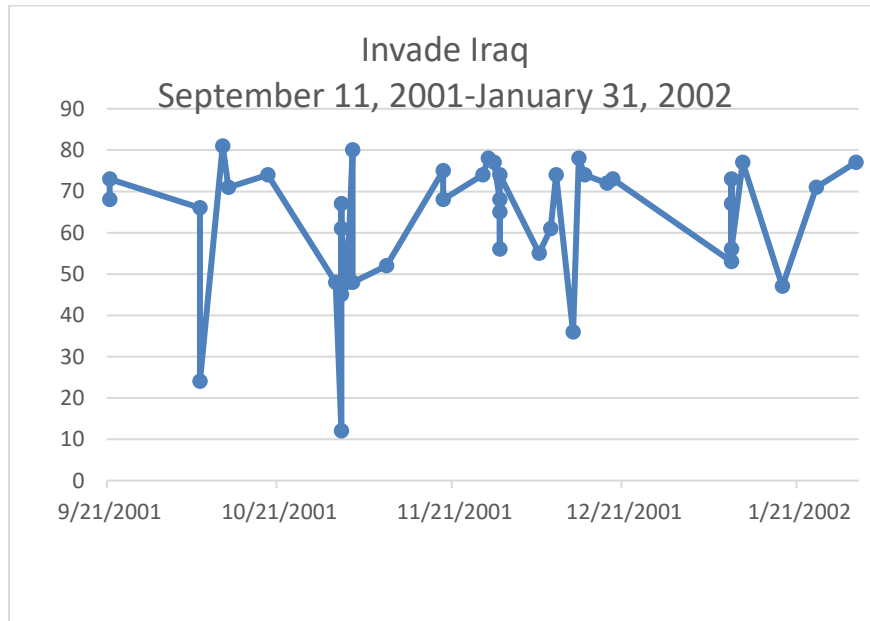


Figure 4

The questions were not worded identically. Many were posited with caveats and conditions that made each question unique. Nevertheless, all were focused on whether the United States should attack Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. (See sample questions in Appendix 1.) Depending on how the question was asked, opinion favored invading Iraq an average of 63.3% and ranged from a low of 12% to a high of 81%.

With the Taliban and al Qaida in disarray, the administration needed a new target for its “war on terror.” Who better to fill that role than the dictator of Iraq?

March 2002

The March 2002 *Public Papers* reveals 402 uses of the word *terror*. It should be

pointed out that sometimes the word was spoken by reporters and not always by President Bush. Reporters were naturally curious to learn the president's thoughts on the subject, and the president was always willing to engage.

By contrast, *Iraq* appears 25 times in March. In this set of documents, while it is clear Iraq is justifiably being closely associated with terrorism, there is still no direct link with the events of 9/11. What is clear is the inference that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction *as well as* connections to terrorist organizations. The emphasis here shifted from undefined terrorism to tangible *weapons of mass destruction* (WMD), a term used 14 times this month, always in connection with Iraq. Additionally, specific types of WMD (chemical, biological, nuclear) are invoked in proximity to either *Iraq* or *Saddam Hussein*.

Bush first mentioned WMD during a March 1, 2002, political fundraiser. Bush warned of the threat posed should a terrorist group team with “a nation that is known for developing weapons of mass destruction” (*United States*, 2002, Book 1). That nation, of course, was Iraq.

At another political fundraiser, held March 4th, Bush averred that the U. S. would not allow “nontransparent dictators to develop weapons of mass destruction” (*United States*, 2002, Book 1). Of all the “nontransparent dictators” then in the world, only one had Bush's undivided attention—Saddam Hussein.

In a speech marking the six-month anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Bush declared the United States knew that some state sponsors of terrorism already possessed weapons of mass destruction. According to the president, this was one of the “facts that cannot be denied” (*United States*, 2002, Book 2).

During a press conference on March 13, Bush was asked about the possibility of proceeding against Iraq without international support. His answer included both an implication that Iraq was *developing* weapons of mass destruction to threaten the United States and a reminder that Iraq had in fact *used* chemical weapons to kill its own citizens (*United States, 2002, Book 1*).

In an exchange with reporters on March 21st, Vice-president Dick Cheney twice repeated the accusation that Iraq was producing weapons of mass destruction, particularizing his comments with assertions Iraq was manufacturing chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Cheney also pointed out that Hussein had reneged on his pledge to the United Nations to “get rid of all his weapons of mass destruction” (*United States, 2002, Book 1*).

On March 22nd, in a joint press conference with the president of Mexico, Bush was asked about his intentions with respect to Iraq. In response, Bush repeated his charge of weapons of mass destruction, invoking the phrase four times (*United States, 2002, Book 1*).

Through an apparently intentional effort, the Bush administration had engendered and nurtured the idea that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction it could easily hand over to its terrorist allies, figuring correctly that this would be a major cause for concern to Americans. And this still without a shred of evidence as to its veracity.

America’s hydra-headed television news establishment added its several voices to the government’s determined message of fear of weapons of mass destruction. Figure 5 below illustrates the number of times *weapons of mass destruction* was verbalized during

March by the five outlets under examination—a total of 396 times, or 2,636% more than the government.

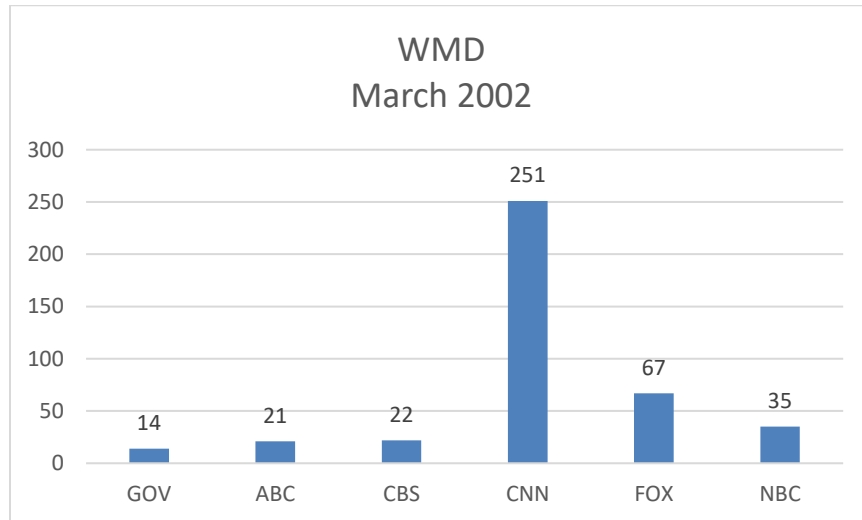


Figure 5

This amount of repetition could not help but affect the thinking and attitude of the American public. In an ABC News/Washington Post poll conducted the second week of March, 2002, 72% of respondents favored military action to topple Hussein. Seventy-seven percent favored doing it even without allies. A Zogby poll taken in the same week tallied 61% in favor, while a Time/CNN poll tallied 70%.

It is significant that by the beginning of April, 81% in a Pew poll felt it was “very important” to attack Iraq if that country was “developing nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction.” It is also significant that by this time there was still no evidence Iraq was doing any such thing and that the premise for this question was a complete fabrication, playing right into the hands of the administration.

October 2002

On October 7, 2002, President Bush spoke to the nation from Cincinnati, Ohio. The

speech was focused entirely on Iraq, its connection to terrorism, and its alleged program of weapons of mass destruction production. Thirty-five times in this 8,342-word speech, Bush invoked the word “terror,” while invoking “Iraq” 66 times. Though weapons of mass destruction were the main subject of the speech, the phrase itself was used only four times. Instead, Bush delineated specific categories of weapons: nuclear (20 times), biological (11 times), and chemical (13 times), always in association with Iraq or Saddam and always reinforcing the identification of Saddam with terrorists (*United States, 2002, Book 2*).

Television news did its part repeating and reinforcing Bush’s words. Figure 6 below shows the extent to which the five news agencies being studied added volume to the administration’s rhetoric.

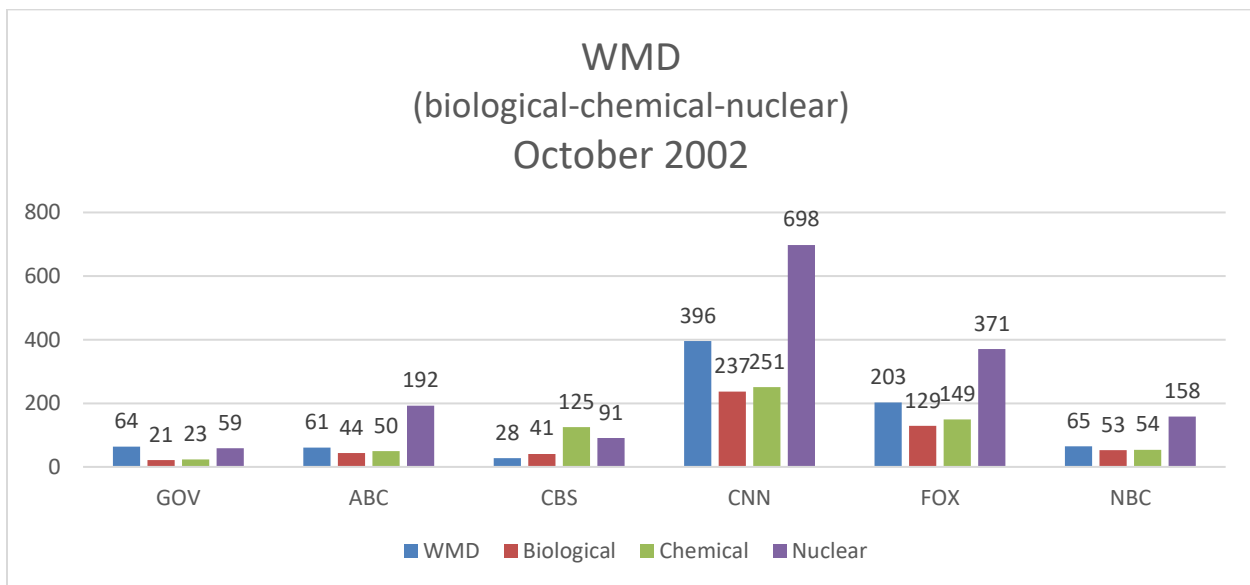


Figure 6

During the week of October 7 to October 13, a TIPPI/Investor's Business Daily/Christian Science Monitor poll of 912 people found that 80% of them felt “Defending

the US from the Iraqi regime that possesses weapons of mass destruction” should be a major factor in the decision to invade. A Pew News Interest Index Poll of 1,751 adults taken October 17 through 27 tallied 59% of them worried biological or chemical weapons would be used against U. S. troops. The administration’s message about Iraq’s alleged WMD had taken firm root. Keep in mind the fact that the administration, even at this late date, had provided no actual proof such weapons existed in Iraq’s arsenal.

January-March 2003

By January of 2003, 89% of Americans believed Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (*Prevention*, 2003). To cement that public support firmly into place, in the closing days before the invasion, the administration turned on a fire hose of propaganda. The U. S. government asserted that Saddam Hussein was refusing to disarm, though ordered to do so by United Nations mandates. The concept of disarming carried with it the unsubtle implication that Iraq was in possession of something to disarm, like weapons of mass destruction. The *Public Papers* contains 257 instances of “disarm” and its derivative forms during the last three months pre-invasion (*United States*, 2003, Book 1). The administration’s repeated use of the term “disarm” and its variants gave a potent assist to its more forthright accusations of possession.

To make sure its audience understood the administration’s view of the threatening militarization of Iraq, these last three months the *Public Papers* includes over 50 collocations of the terms *Iraq/Saddam* and *weapons of mass destruction*. This count does not include associations between *Iraq/Saddam* and specific categories of WMD, such as *nuclear, chemical and biological*, of which there are many. Many of these associations are

direct, while many are curvilinear, making the conclusion for American and world citizens inescapable: Iraq must be invaded.

Television dutifully followed suit. CBS alone cited *weapons of mass destruction* in clear relation to *Iraq* or *Saddam* over 280 times in the same time period. A reading of the CBS transcripts is clear evidence of television news' habit of playing and re-playing the same sound bites over and over and over, fulfilling effective propaganda's requirement for repetition. Many sound bites were repeated five or more times. For example, a piece positing the search for weapons of mass destruction as a rationale for the military occupation of Iraq which aired originally on February 26, 2003, was ultimately broadcast eight times.

The ever-voluble CNN predictably contributed even more to this echo chamber phenomenon. In the first two and a half months of 2003, CNN transcripts combined *Iraq* or *Saddam* roughly 2,700 times with *weapons of mass destruction*, or 5,400% of the government's total.

Even a denial by Saddam that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction served the Bush administration's goal of convincing Americans that exactly the opposite was true. In early February, Saddam, perhaps to sway world opinion and preempt the feared impact of Colin Powell's address to the United Nations the following day, gave a televised interview to Arab Television journalist and former British MP Tony Benn. In response to Mr. Benn's blunt question "Does Iraq possess weapons of mass destruction?" Saddam replied "...Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction whatsoever" (C-Span, 2003). And he reiterated this point later in the interview, saying "...Iraq is free of such weapons" (C-Span,

2003). With no encouragement from Bush, Saddam himself contributed volume to the allegation against him.

Television news naturally pounced on this. Over the course of two days (February 4-5), CNN replayed snippets of the interview fourteen times, so that its audience could hear the words “weapons of mass destruction” over and over again, pronounced by Saddam himself. Other news outlets did the same, though with less frequency. Convincing Americans of the charge against Iraq had become a deadly game of word association.

A Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll taken February 7-9 found 93% of respondents were certain or believed it likely Iraq had the capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction (CNN, 2003, Q. 26). In the same poll, 94% of Americans believed it was either likely or certain Iraq had chemical and biological weapons (CNN, 2003, Q. 27). It is impossible to say what influenced these answers, whether it was Colin Powell’s astounding presentation (complete with blurry surveillance photos and a bottle of mock anthrax) or Saddam’s unconvincing denials. In either case, the administration had the citizens exactly where it wanted them.

On March 19, 2003, the United States of America invaded Iraq.

Discussion

So, by the evidence presented herein, we see that the Bush administration used propagandistic framing to sell its war with Iraq. The main requirements of propaganda—repetition and emotional appeal—are everywhere in evidence. We see also that this framing, whether wittingly or not, was parroted, mirrored, and gigantically amplified by the television news media under examination, which consequently failed “to stimulate debate

and check government power” (Paololucci, 2009, p. 880). Thus, the American public came to be seduced to a high level of agreement for a policy supported by nothing but assertions.

This study does not presume to present readers with an irrefutable verdict as to cause and effect. Many factors beyond the scope of this analysis could arguably have been as influential in rushing the nation into war with Iraq as the skewed messaging of the administration and the repetition of that messaging by mass media. However, the fact is that weapons of mass destruction were not found in Iraq then and have never been found in the twenty-plus years since. Those weapons were nothing more than an excuse to start a war to exterminate a reviled dictator. But considering the death and destruction that has resulted, it could be said that this excuse was as deadly as any Iraqi gas attack.

Judith Miller (2015), the *New York Times* reporter who was accused of being unquestioning and even supportive of the administration, wrote that Saddam’s alleged pursuit of WMD was “the centerpiece of the argument for planning a military campaign to topple him” (p. 394). Though it was the Bush administration that lit the fuse for the invasion of Iraq, it was mass media—specifically television news—that blew on it like a bellows. The *Columbia Journalism Review* in 2004 asserted “the media were co-conspirators in America’s rush into this illegal war” (as cited in Altheide & Grimes, 2005, p. 635). Millions of Americans watched television news and absorbed its reports, some repeated as a verbal Möbius strip in a hectic attempt to fill the twenty-four-hour news cycle and to compete for ratings. Hearing over and over again that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and that it might offer use of those weapons to terrorists, Americans

came to believe it. Supporting Bush's plan to attack Iraq was the only thing to do. There was no choice. The invasion of Iraq perfectly exemplifies the idea that "Propaganda is the fuel that feeds the machinery of war" (Steuter & Wills, 2008, p. 17).

Teachers at every level, but especially librarians in higher education, need to convey to their students the importance of critical reading and critical listening. Students need to learn not just how to judge the quality of the information on which they might rely, but to judge whether what they are reading or hearing is even true. In an era when the president of the United States lies over 30,000 times (Washington Post) with a straight face and every fact that does not comport with his agenda is met with the retort "FAKE NEWS," equipping citizens with this ability is more important than ever.

But how to do this?

Conclusion

For over a decade, the citizens of Ukraine have been subject not just to a brutal military beating by Russia, but to a relentless campaign of Russian propaganda meant to undermine confidence in their government and in themselves. To combat this propaganda campaign, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), an organization dedicated to global education, created a curriculum called Learn to Discern (L2D) to teach Ukrainians to "think more critically about how they consume media in order to question misleading news" (Murrock et al., 2018, p. 54). Students of the L2D curriculum learned, among other things, basic standards of journalism and to recognize the "markers of manipulation and disinformation in the media" (Murrock et al., 2018, p. 57). The curriculum also made students aware of the types of propaganda employed, the types of

media used in propaganda campaigns, as well as media ownership (Murrock et al., 2018).

This IREX training resulted in overall improvement in participants' ability to recognize propagandistic manipulation when they faced it, as measured against a control group. The IREX curriculum is a potential model for librarian-led instruction in propaganda detection.

More recently, University of Windsor political science professor James H. Wittebols has sought to address the need for heightened information awareness with a course called Information Searching and Analysis. The course addresses students' confirmation bias through an exercise that requires them to find information that does not confirm what they think is true. Students also learn website and news analysis. Students probe sources for ownership and viewpoint, distinguish news from opinion and learn that the Internet "is watching their digital behavior and predicting what they want to hear" (Wittebols, 2016, p. 8). These are important skills if citizens are to avoid being duped by propaganda.

Sadly, propaganda and ideological manipulation are here to stay, and the techniques they bring to bear are growing more sophisticated and harder to detect. Nevertheless, it is the job of educators, particularly information professionals like librarians, to make sure the public knows when it is being had. For as Jonathan Swift (1954) wrote in 1710, "As the vilest writer has his readers, so the greatest liar has his believers; and it often happens that, if a lie be believed only for an hour, it has done its work, and there is no farther occasion for it" (p. 73).

Acknowledgements

The text analysis aspect of this research would not have been possible without the generous help of Cyrus Cox and Yijie Kang, graduate students in computer science. They each automated ways to extract valuable information from the millions of words in the various text corpora that had to be analyzed. To them my thanks and good wishes.

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Appendix 1: Survey Questions

The following are some of the survey questions cited in the analysis above. The complete surveys may be accessed through the Roper iPoll database

(<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/ipoll/>).

September 2001

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2001). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism Reaction Poll # 3, Question 25 [USGALLUP.01SP21.R16A]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

(I'd like to ask you a few questions about the events (terrorist attacks) that occurred last week in New York City and Washington, DC, September 11, 2001.)... If the United States takes military action, how important a goal should each of following be--should it be a very important goal, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? How about... destroying terrorist operations in Afghanistan?

- 91% Very important
- 5% Somewhat important
- 1% Not too important
- 2% Not important at all
- 1% No opinion

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2001). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism Reaction Poll # 3, Question 27 [USGALLUP.01SP21.R16C]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

(I'd like to ask you a few questions about the events (terrorist attacks) that occurred last week in New York City and Washington, DC, September 11, 2001.)... (If the United States takes military action, how important a goal should each of following be--should it be a very important goal, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?) How about... capturing or killing Osama bin Laden?

- 85% Very important
- 10% Somewhat important
- 2% Not too important
- 1% Not important at all
- 2% No opinion

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2001). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism Reaction Poll # 3, Question 29 [USGALLUP.01SP21.R16E]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

(I'd like to ask you a few questions about the events (terrorist attacks) that occurred last week in New York City and Washington, DC, September 11, 2001.)... (If the United States takes military action, how important a goal should each of following be--should it be a very important goal, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?) How about... removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?

- 68% Very important
- 22% Somewhat important
- 5% Not too important
- 2% Not important at all
- 3% No opinion

Wirthlin Worldwide. (2001). Wirthlin Worldwide Poll: September 2001, Question 13 [USWIRTH.01SEP.RA07B]. Wirthlin Worldwide. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Do you believe that...Iraq encourages, trains, and supports terrorists, or not?

- 90% Yes--Iraq supports terrorists
- 5% No--Iraq does not support terrorists
- 5% Don't know/Refused

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2001). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism Reaction Poll # 2, Question 32 [USGALLUP.01SP14.R14B]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

(I'd like to ask you a few questions about the events (terrorist attacks) that occurred this past Tuesday (September 11, 2001) in New York City and Washington, DC.)... (Overall, how much do you blame each of the following for the terrorist attacks this past Tuesday--a great deal, a moderate amount, only a little, or not at all?) How about... Iraq?

- 41% A great deal
- 32% A moderate amount
- 9% Only a little
- 9% Not at all
- 9% No opinion

March 2002

ABC News/Washington Post. (2002). ABC News/Washington Post Poll: 9/11 Attack Six Months Later, Question 10 [USABCWP.031102.R18]. TNS Intersearch. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

What if U.S. (United States) allies opposed such military action (against Iraq to force Sadam Hussein from power)--in that case would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq?

77% Favor
21% Oppose
3% No opinion

ABC News/Washington Post. (2002). ABC News/Washington Post Poll: 9/11 Attack Six Months Later, Question 27 [USABCWP.031102.R17]. TNS Intersearch. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Would you favor or oppose having U.S. (United States) forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power?

72% Favor
24% Oppose
4% No opinion

Zogby International. (2002). Zogby International Poll: March 2002, Question 5 [USZOGBY.031402.R02C]. Zogby International. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

(Do you favor or oppose using each of the following steps against the war on terrorism?)...
Attacking Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein.

61% Favor
28% Oppose
11% Not sure

Cable News Network (CNN)/Time Magazine. (2002). Terrorism/Mideast Conflict/Sexual Abuse in the Church/Andrea Yates, Question 30 [USHARRIS.Y031502.R16]. Harris Interactive. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Do you think that the US (United States) should or should not use military action to attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq as part of the war against terrorism?

70% Yes
23% No
7% Not sure

Chicago Council on Foreign Relations/International Herald Tribune/Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. (2002). Pew Research Center/International Herald Tribune/Chicago Council on Foreign Relations Poll: Bush International Poll, Question 15 [USPSRA.041702.R14A]. Princeton Survey Research Associates. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Here are some reasons given for using military force against Iraq. As I read a reason, tell me if it is a very important, fairly important, or not important reason to justify the use of military force against Iraq....If we learned that Iraq is developing nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction...would that be a very important reason, fairly important reason, or not important reason to justify the use of military force against Iraq?

81% Very important

- 11% Fairly important
- 5% Not too important
- 3% Don't know/Refused

October 2002

Christian Science Monitor/Investor's Business Daily. (2002). Christian Science Monitor/Investor's Business Daily Poll: October 2002, Question 44 [USTIPP.101602.R49]. TIPP--Techno Metrica Institute of Policy and Politics. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

44. (In your opinion, when it comes to the current administration's policy of regime change in Iraq, would you describe each of the following as a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor behind that policy?) How about... Defending the US from the Iraqi regime that possesses weapons of mass destruction?... How much of a factor is it in the Administration's regime-change policy?

- 80% Major factor
- 11% Minor factor
- 4% Not a factor
- 4% Not sure

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. (2002). Pew Research Center Poll: Late October 2002 News Interest Index--Iraq, Question 23 [USPSRA.103002.R08B]. Princeton Survey Research Associates. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Thinking about a possible war with Iraq, how worried are you that...Iraq might use biological or chemical weapons against U.S. (United States) troops...a great deal, a fair amount, or not much?

- 59% A great deal
- 26% A fair amount
- 13% Not much
- 2% Don't know/Refused

January-March 2003

Prevention Magazine. (2003). CBS News Poll: Congress and the Bush Administration/Iraq/Children's Issues/Health, Question 59 [USCBS.010703.R25]. CBS News. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Do you think Iraq probably does or probably does not have weapons of mass destruction that the U.N. (United Nations) weapons inspectors have not found yet?

- 89% Does
- 6% Does not
- 5% Don't know/No answer

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2003). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism/NASA/Iraq, Question 26 [USGALLUP.03FEB7.R18B]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Which of the following statements best describes your view of whether...Iraq has facilities to create weapons of mass destruction? Would you say--you are certain that this is true, you think it is likely that this is true, but you are not certain, you think it is unlikely that this is true, but you are not certain, or you are certain that this is not true?

- 55% Certain is true
- 38% Likely but not certain
- 5% Unlikely but not certain
- 1% Certain is not true
- 1% No opinion

Cable News Network (CNN)/USA Today. (2003). Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll: Terrorism/NASA/Iraq, Question 27 [USGALLUP.03FEB7.R18C]. Gallup Organization. Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Which of the following statements best describes your view of whether...Iraq has biological or chemical weapons? Would you say--you are certain that this is true, you think it is likely that this is true, but you are not certain, you think it is unlikely that this is true, but you are not certain, or you are certain that this is not true?

- 56% Certain is true
- 38% Likely but not certain
- 4% Unlikely but not certain
- 1% Certain is not true
- 1% No opinion

Appendix 2—Transcripts

In addition to the presidential documents, transcripts of the below-listed news programs from September 11, 2001, to March 19, 2003, were analyzed:

ABC

- ABC News Special Report: America Under Attack
- World News This Morning
- Good Morning America
- Nightline
- World News Tonight

CBS

- CBS News Special Report
- The Early Show
- CBS Evening News
- The Osgood File
- CBS Morning News

NBC

- Today
- NBC News Special Report: Attack on America
- NBC Nightly News

Fox News Channel (FOX)

- The O'Reilly Factor
- Terrorism Hits America: Live Event
- Fox Special Report with Brit Hume
- Fox News Edge
- Hannity & Colmes
- On the Record with Greta Van Susteren
- Fox News Sunday
- Fox Wire
- Your World with Neil Cavuto
- The Big Story with John Gibson

Cable News Network (CNN)

- CNN Breaking News
- CNN Live Event/Special
- CNN Saturday Morning News
- CNN Diplomatic License
- Larry King Weekend
- Newsnight Aaron Brown
- Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer
- American Morning with Paula Zahn
- People in the News
- Lou Dobbs Moneyline
- Inside Politics
- Live on Location
- Daybreak
- Connie Chung Tonight
- Crossfire
- Wolf Blitzer Reports
- Showdown: Iraq
- Live Today
- Talkback Live
- Larry King Live